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New York Federal Executive Board Honors Dyker Heights Resident

NEW YORK CITY – The New York Federal Executive Board recently honored Dyker Heights resident Joseph Graffagnino with its annual Community Service Award at a special ceremony held on Ellis Island in May. The award recognizes Graffagnino's initiative and efforts to develop a device that will help safeguard firemen entering buildings to battle fires. In developing this device, Graffagnino is also creating a legacy for his firefighter son who perished in the line of duty at the Deustch Bank Fire in New York City in August, 2007.

With over 40 years of technology and telecommunications expertise in his work for the federal government, Graffagnino gave his own time, expertise and energy to take an idea, incorporate current technology, and evolve it into a prototype system using Radio Frequency Identification chips which could be attached to a helmet, sewn into clothing, or worn as a badge. These devices, when combined with electronic sensing equipment, allow for the tracking of each firefighter's location from a base station located on the fire truck. The technology enables the FDNY to "see" and "hear" all of the responding firefighters inside a building. The prototype system is currently being tested in several New York City firehouses.

Graffagnino started on this mission soon after the death of his son by speaking with firemen of various rank, throughout the City. While evolving his idea, he formed relationships and garnered support with all levels of the FDNY and Uniformed Association of Firefighters, local city and state legislators, as well as the Office of the Mayor of New York City. Graffagnino has also reached out to establish working relationships with building and construction groups to help promote building and fire safety.

A Marine Corps veteran who served in Vietnam, Graffagnino has worked for the U.S. General Services Administration's (GSA) Federal Acquisition Service for the past nine years as a network services expert. He is also head of the Usher Society of St. Ephrem's Roman Catholic Church in Dyker Heights and is president of the Brooklyn Aquarium Society.

Graffagnino will also be featured in the coming weeks on FACES of GSA, a special section of GSA's national website that focuses on the agency's employees. FACES of GSA can be found in the newsroom of GSA's website at www.gsa.gov/newsroom.

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